

Message Text

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TOSEC 188

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJ: UNDER SECRETARY SISCO'S INTERVIEW ON "TODAY" SHOW

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SISCO

1. FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS TEXT OF INTERVIEW I HAD ON "TODAY" SHOW OF NOVEMBER 20. DINITZ AND SHALEV CALLED ME TO EXPRESS THEIR SATISFACTION WITH IT.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED TEXT: QUOTE: MR. VALERIANI: MR. SISCO, YOU SAID ON MONDAY IN AN INTERVIEW TO BE PUBLISHED OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY THAT THE UNITED STATES NOW REGARDS THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION AS THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR ALL PALESTINIANS. NOW THAT SEEMS TO GO FURTHER THAN YOU'VE EVER GONE BEFORE.

3. MR. SISCO: DICK, I THINK THAT WAS AN UNFORTUNATE WAY CONFIDENTIAL

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TO PUT IT. ACTUALLY WHAT I WAS TRYING TO REFLECT WAS THAT THE ARABS CONSIDER THE PLO AS THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION. NOW LET ME MAKE VERY CLEAR THAT OUR POLICY IS AS STATED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE. WE'VE ACCORDED

NO RECOGNITION OF ANY KIND; OUR POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED.

4. I THINK SOME PEOPLE HAVE READ SOMETHING INTO THAT, I WAS REALLY TRYING TO STATE A FACT AS CONCEIVED BY THE ARABS,

THAT THE ARABS DO CONCEIVE OF THE PLO AS THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION.

5. MR. VALERIANI: YOU SEEM TO BE PREPARING THE GROUNDWORK FOR BRINGING THE PLO INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

6. MR. SISCO: NO, I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE CASE, DICK. AGAIN, I'VE GOT TO UNDERSCORE THAT OUR POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED. LET'S LOOK FOR EXAMPLE AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE MOMENT. WE HAD A MAJOR SPEECH THAT WAS MADE BY ARAFAT QUITE RECENTLY. I FOUND NO OPENINGS IN THAT SPEECH. AS THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE LAST FRIDAY, HE HARDLY SAW THAT AS A MODERATE APPROACH. THERE WAS NO, FOR EXAMPLE, EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT IMPLICATION OF GIVING UP TERRORISM AS A MATTER OF POLICY. THE PROPOSAL FOR A SECULAR STATE WOULD REALLY HAVE THE AFFECT OF NEGATING THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AS WE KNOW IT. SO THAT, I THINK, IN TERMS OF THAT PARTICULAR SPEECH, I SAW NO OPENING.

7. MR. VALERIANI: BUT DOESN'T THE DECISION BY THE ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN RABAT TO ALLOW THE PLO TO NEGOTIATE FOR ALL PALESTINIANS IN EFFECT THROW THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS INTO DEADLOCK?

8. MR. SISCO: NO, I DON'T THINK THAT WE'RE AT AN IMPASSE OR AT A DEADLOCK. I'D BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT RABAT, I THINK, HAS BEEN COMPLICATING TO OUR EFFORT. BUT, DICK, YOU WERE ON THIS RECENT TRIP WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE. THE THING THAT STRUCK ME FROM THIS RECENT TRIP WAS THAT BOTH SIDES WERE AT GREAT PAINS TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE DOORS OF DIPLOMACY REMAINED OPEN. NOTE FOR EXAMPLE THE STRONG CONFIDENTIAL

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ENDORSEMENT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE SECRETARY'S MISSION THAT CAME OUT OF CAIRO. LIKEWISE IN SAUDI ARABIA AND ELSEWHERE. I THINK THE DOORS REMAIN OPEN, AND I THINK THAT WHAT WE CAN EXPECT OVER THE COMING WEEKS IS A PERIOD OF QUIET DIPLOMACY, LARGELY WITHIN THE CONFINES OF DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS BUT OUR EFFORTS ARE GOING TO CONTINUE AND THEY'RE GOING TO CONTINUE PRIMARILY BECAUSE BOTH SIDES WANT OUR EFFORTS TO CONTINUE.

9. MISS WALTERS: FIRST OF ALL, MR. SISCO--PERHAPS ON YOUR WAY TO OUR STUDIO--IN OUR LAST HOUR WE HAD THE CHIEF SPOKESMAN FOR THE PLO DELEGATION TO THE UN IN THIS COUNTRY WHO SAID THAT THE PALESTINIAN ATTACKS WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL WHEN

THE ISRAELIS NEGOTIATED WITH THE PLO. I'D LIKE TO ASK TWO QUESTIONS. FIRST OF ALL, UP UNTIL RECENTLY, THERE HAD BEEN

THE FEELING AS EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT, THAT THE ARABS WERE BEGINNING TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL AS A SOVEREIGN JEWISH STATE AND WOULD NEGOTIATE ON THOSE TERMS. THEN WITH THE RECOGNITION BY THE UNITED NATIONS OF THE PLO WHICH SAYS THEY WANT A SECULAR STATE, ONE ISN'T TOO SURE WHAT THE PREVAILING ARAB POINT OF VIEW IS AND WHETHER PRESIDENT SADAT'S STATEMENTS IN THE PAST DID RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE. CAN YOU GIVE US AN IDEA OF WHAT THE PREVAILING ARAB VIEWPOINT IS NOW?

10. MR SISCO: YES, I THINK I CAN, BARBARA. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE PRINCIPLE ARAB STATES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER HAVE ALL IN THE PAST, AND THEY HAVE NOT CHANGED THEIR POSITION IN THIS REGARD, SUPPORTED RESOLUTION 242, THE NOVEMBER 1967 SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION AND A SUBSEQUENT RESOLUTION THAT CALLS FOR NEGOTIATION I HAVE DETECTED, BARBARA, NO CHANGE IN THAT ATTITUDE AND THOSE TWO RESOLUTIONS ARE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION OF CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN ARAB STATES AND AN ISRAELI STATE.

11. MISS WALTERS: MAY I ASK THE SECOND QUESTION THEN. OVER THE WEEKEND WHEN THERE WAS A SCARE OF A POSSIBLE WAR, THE THREAT OF A POSSIBLE WAR, A VERY IMMINENT WAR BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL, SECRETARY KISSINGER TALKED WITH THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, TALKED WITH ARAB LEADERS, HE ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

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TALKED WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND RECEIVED SOME KIND OF ASSURANCE THAT PUT A DAMPER ON THE FEARS OF THE WAR. CAN YOU GIVE US ANY IDEA OF WHAT THAT CONVERSATION WITH THE SOVIET LEADERS INVOLVED?

12. MR. SISCO: OBVIOUSLY BARBARA, I CAN'T GO INTO THE DETAILS AND YOU'RE RIGHT, THE SECRETARY DID UNDERTAKE ALL OF THESE DISCUSSIONS. THE ONLY THING I WOULD SAY ABOUT SOVIET POLICY WHICH INDIRECTLY REALLY GETS AT WHAT YOU'VE ASKED, IS THAT I BELIEVE THERE IS A MUTUAL RECOGNITION, BOTH IN MOSCOW AND IN WASHINGTON, THAT THERE IS A MUTUAL INTEREST THAT THE MIDDLE EAST NOT BREAK OUT INTO ANOTHER WAR. I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT THAT BOTH OF THE MAJOR POWERS RECOGNIZE THE DANGER OF THE SITUATION. YOU KNOW, YOU LOOK AT THE MIDDLE EAST; NOT ONLY DO YOU HAVE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS, YOU HAVE THE INTRA-ARAB RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE IMPORTANT, THEN YOU'VE GOT SUPER-IMPOSED THE WHOLE MAJOR POWER COMPLEX, THE INTEREST OF THE MAJOR POWERS AND NOW ON TOP OF ALL OF THESE YOU HAVE THIS VERY DELICATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRODUCER AND CONSUMER. THIS IS WHY I'VE OFTEN SAID THAT THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY IS THE MOST COMPLICATED SITUATION IN THE WORLD.

I FEAR AND I'M CONCERNED ABOUT THIS. I WOULD HOPE THAT I
THOUGHT THAT TERRORISM WOULD BE AT AN END. I FIND THESE

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TERRORIST ACTS DEPLORABLE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUED A
STATEMENT YESTERDAY CONDEMNING THIS LATEST TERRORIST
ATTACK AND THESE TERRORIST ATTACKS HAVE TO BE UNDERSTOOD,
I THINK, BARBARA, AS ANTI-PEACE ACTIONS RATHER THAN
ACTIONS THAT HELP NEGOTIATIONS OR HELP MAKE PRACTICAL
PROGRESS.

13. MR. VALERIANI: IN THAT CONNECTION, MR. SISCO,
EARLIER IN THE YEAR, THERE SEEMED TO BE A MOMENTUM TOWARD
PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. NOW IT SEEMS TO HAVE SHIFTED;
THERE SEEMS TO BE A MOMENTUM TOWARD WAR AS EXEMPLIFIED BY
THE EVENTS OF LAST WEEKEND. HOW CLOSE IS IT?

14. MR. SISCO: WELL, I'M NOT SO SURE THAT ONE CAN DESCRIBE
THE PRESENT SITUATION AS A MOMENTUM TOWARDS WAR. CERTAINLY
THERE'S BEEN AN INCREASE IN TENSION, BUT AS LONG AS THE
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OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIPLOMACY REMAIN, AS LONG AS THE PEOPLE
IN THAT AREA FEEL THAT THERE IS SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY, THEN
I THINK WE'VE GOT A CHANCE OF MORE PRACTICAL PROGRESS AND
IN THIS REGARD, I THINK THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO
REMAIN KEY.

15. MR. VALERIANI: WELL, YOU'LL HAVE A VERY QUICK
OPPORTUNITY TO TEST THAT WHEN THE MANDATE FOR THE UNITED
NATIONS FORCES ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS COMES UP FOR RENEWAL.
ARE THE SYRIANS GOING TO AGREE TO A RENEWAL?

16. MR. SISCO: WELL THE MANDATE FOR THE U.N. FORCE ON
THE SYRIAN FRONT, AS YOU SAY, COMES UP AT THE END OF THE
MONTH. THE U.N. FORCE BOTH ON THE EGYPTIAN FRONT AS WELL
AS THE SYRIAN FRONT, IN MY JUDGMENT, IS A MAJOR ELEMENT
OF STABILITY. BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO THE POSITIONING
OF THIS FORCE, AND I THINK IT'S ALL IMPORTANT THAT THERE
BE AN EXTENSION BECAUSE IT IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE
DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ITSELF. AND I THINK WE'LL HAVE
TO WAIT AND SEE. MY HOPE IS THAT BOTH SIDES WILL SEE THE
ADVANTAGE OF MAINTAINING EVERY ELEMENT OF THE DISENGAGE-
MENT AGREEMENT, PARTICULARLY IN THIS VERY DELICATE AND
TENSE PERIOD OF TIME AND THAT THE UNITED NATIONS REALLY
SERVES THE INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES
AND IS IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES.

17. MR. VALERIANI: DO YOU EXPECT IT TO BE RENEWED?

18. MR. SISCO: I'M SAYING THAT THIS MATTER OBVIOUSLY--
NO ONE CAN PREDICT WITH ANY KIND OF CERTAINTY--I'M SAYING
THAT IT'S IMPORTANT THAT IT BE RENEWED AND WE'RE CERTAINLY

GOING TO WORK TO THIS END.

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19. MR. VALERIANI: YOU'VE EMPHASIZED OVER AND OVER AGAIN, MR. SISCO, ABOUT THE KEY ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES. HOW MUCH PRESSURE DO YOU FEEL BECAUSE OF THE ARABS OIL WEAPON?

20. MR. SISCO: WELL, DICK, LET ME SAY VERY FRANKLY--THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY HAS GOTTEN MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT HAS BEEN OVER THE YEARS. THE UNITED STATES, AFTER ALL, CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS VERY SIGNIFICANT OVERALL POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS IN THE AREA. I THINK I'D BE LESS THAN CANDID IF I DIDN'T SAY THAT OIL WAS A FACTOR IN THE SITUATION, OF COURSE; IT'S AN IMPORTANT SOURCE FOR OIL. THE WHOLE MONETARY PICTURE IS OF SIGNIFICANCE. BUT IN THIS CONNECTION, I THINK THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS CHARTED THE WAY VERY, VERY CLEARLY IN HIS SPEECH THAT HE GAVE RECENTLY, TO MY OLD ALMA MATER BY THE WAY, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. I THINK HE UNDERSCORED REALLY TWO THINGS: ONE, WE IN THIS COUNTRY MUST GO AHEAD AND TAKE EVERY MEASURE TO BECOME AS INDEPENDENT AS POSSIBLE FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES. IN OTHER WORDS, TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE PROJECT INDEPENDENCE A REALITY. AND SECONDLY, ALONGSIDE THAT, IT'S OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE THAT WE TAKE THE LEAD AS WE ARE IN HELPING TO ORGANIZE THE CONSUMER NATIONS SO THAT THEY ALSO, TOGETHER WITH US, TAKE THE KIND OF PARALLEL STEPS WHICH WILL REDUCE THE RELIANCE ON THE OUTSIDE. THE SECRETARY FEELS, AND I MUST SAY I FEEL EQUALLY STRONGLY, THAT UNLESS THE CONSUMERS CAN ORGANIZE THEMSELVES IN THIS WAY, THEN THERE WILL BE DIFFICULTIES AND WE WILL BE SUBJECT TO PRESSURE.

21. MR. VALERIANI: BUT THAT'S LONG-RANGE MR. SISCO. WHAT DO YOU DO NOW IN THE SHORT TERM UNDER THESE PRESSURES?

22. MR. SISCO: I THINK THAT WE DO EVERYTHING THAT WE CAN IN THE SHORT-RANGE; WE DO WHAT WE CAN IN TERMS OF STABILIZING THE MONETARY SITUATION AND I THINK WE MOVE AS RAPIDLY AS WE CAN. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN LINKING THIS WHOLE MATTER WITH OUR OWN EFFORTS TOWARD A POLITICAL SOLUTION. BUT AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, WE WOULD BE GOING AHEAD TRYING TO MAKE PRACTICAL PROGRESS ON A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHETHER THIS OTHER FACTOR WAS THERE OR NOT.

23: MR. VALERIANI: THANK YOU VERY MUCH. END QUOTE. INGERSOLL

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